

CANDIDATE INFORMATION HANDBOOK

EMBALMER



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

CEMETERY AND FUNERAL BUREAU

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE EXAMINATION

California law requires each candidate for licensure as an embalmer to pass an examination. The purpose of the examination is to determine whether the candidate has the knowledge needed to provide safe and effective services to the public. The examination addresses knowledge of practical embalming and of the laws and regulations related to embalming.

DESCRIPTION OF PRACTICE

California Business and Professions Code Section 7640 describes the practice of an embalmer as follows:

An embalmer is one who is duly qualified to disinfect or preserve human remains by the injection or external application of antiseptics, disinfectants or preservative fluids; to prepare human bodies for transportation which are dead of contagious or infectious diseases; and to use derma surgery or plastic art for restoring mutilated features; and who is duly licensed as an embalmer under the laws of the State of California.

EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT

The examination is developed and maintained by the Department of Consumer Affairs (Department), Office of Examination Resources (OER). The individual test items are written by licensed embalmers under the guidance of OER analysts.

CHAPTER 2. APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY

Within 10 days of receipt, the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau (Bureau) will notify the applicant in writing regarding the status of his or her application. If the application is incomplete, the letter will specify what additional information the applicant must provide. Within 120 days after the application is deemed complete, the Bureau will notify the applicant if he or she meets the requirements for candidacy and is eligible to sit for the examination.

ABANDONMENT OF APPLICATION

In accordance with Title 16, California Code of Regulations Section 1254, the Bureau considers an application abandoned if a candidate fails to take the examination within 1 year after being notified of eligibility. Failure to appear at a scheduled examination without prior notice is also considered abandonment. In the event of abandonment, a candidate must submit a new application with the required fee and meet all requirements at the time of filing. Application fees are not reimbursed when an application is abandoned.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

All examination locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, the Bureau grants requests for special accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Please contact the Bureau to request a packet for examination accommodations. In order to receive consideration, any request must specify the accommodation desired and must be accompanied by a letter from an appropriately licensed professional that confirms the disability and supports the usefulness of the accommodation. The completed packet and substantiating documentation must be submitted at least 30 days before the examination.

CHAPTER 3. PREPARATION FOR THE EXAMINATION

OVERVIEW

The embalmer examination is based upon a test plan developed by licensed embalmers. The plan identifies aspects of practice related to the tasks that an embalmer must be able to perform at licensure. The examination contains 150 multiple-choice items that address six areas of job content, and it has a time limit of 3 hours.

DESCRIPTION OF JOB CONTENT AREAS

The embalmer examination covers six content areas that define the scope of knowledge needed for safe and effective practice. Each of the job content areas, weighted on the examination in terms of its importance in practice, is described below.

I. *PRE-EMBALMING* – (15%)

This content area assesses the candidate's ability to prepare the body for embalming and application of pre-embalming treatments.

II. *CASE ANALYSIS* – (19%)

This content area assesses a candidate's ability to evaluate the condition of the body and the cause of death to determine methods and fluids to be used for embalming.

III. *ARTERIAL EMBALMING* – (32%)

This content area assesses the candidate's ability to embalm by arterial injection, select methods and fluids according to cause of death and condition of body, and determine the need for supplemental treatments.

IV. *CAVITY EMBALMING* – (10%)

This content area assesses the candidate's ability to aspirate and inject the body cavity and internal organs to facilitate the embalming process.

V. *RESTORATION* – (6%)

This content area assesses the candidate's ability to evaluate the condition of the body to determine need and extent of restorative treatments.

VI. *POSTEMBALMING TREATMENTS* – (18%)

This content area assesses the candidate's ability to complete the embalming process, including the final cleansing and positioning of the body as well as sanitizing all embalming instruments and equipment used during the embalming process.

EXAMINATION OUTLINE

The examination outline identifies the knowledge required to demonstrate acceptable competence in each of the major content areas. Content areas specify practical knowledge, with references to statutes and provisions of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations, the California Health and Safety Code, and the Business and Professions Code. Candidates should acquire the knowledge that the outline describes before attempting the examination.

I. PRE-EMBALMING (15%)

DESCRIPTION: This content area assesses the candidate's ability to prepare the body for embalming and application of pre-embalming treatments.

Set facial features in as natural a position as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of universal precautions. • Knowledge of state laws and regulations regarding authorization for disposition with or without embalming. • Knowledge of methods for mouth closure. • Knowledge of methods for eye closure. • Knowledge of techniques and procedures to shave facial hair. • Knowledge of techniques to relieve rigor mortis.
Position body in as natural a position as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of universal precautions. • Knowledge of state laws and regulations regarding authorization for disposition with or without embalming. • Knowledge of methods for positioning the head, arms, hands, and feet. • Knowledge of techniques to position limbs affected by physical abnormalities. • Knowledge of techniques to relieve rigor mortis.
Remove medical apparatus from body that can interfere with setting features or embalming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of universal precautions. • Knowledge of state laws and regulations regarding authorization for disposition with or without embalming. • Knowledge of pre-embalming treatments for skin lesions and ulcerations. • Knowledge of pre-embalming treatments for abrasions, lacerations, and fractures.
Apply agents to disinfect body surfaces and orifices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of universal precautions. • Knowledge of state laws and regulations regarding authorization for disposition with or without embalming. • Knowledge of guidelines for personal protective equipment (PPE). • Knowledge of techniques and procedures to cleanse body surfaces and hair. • Knowledge of procedures to apply germicidal agents to body surfaces and orifices. • Knowledge of methods to relieve gases from gas gangrene during pre-embalming. • Knowledge of methods to relieve gases from decomposition during pre-embalming. • Knowledge of procedures to protect skin areas of the body from purge. • Knowledge of pre-embalming treatments for purge.

II. CASE ANALYSIS (19%)

DESCRIPTION: This content area assesses the candidate's ability to evaluate the condition of the body and the cause of death to determine the methods and fluids to be used for embalming.

EVALUATION OF BODY (12%)	Evaluate body for presence of edema or dehydration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of signs of possible tissue gas. • Knowledge of effects of edema on the selection of embalming techniques. • Knowledge of effects of dehydration on the selection of embalming techniques. • Knowledge of signs of edema. • Knowledge of effects of naturally occurring chemicals in the body on the selection of embalming techniques. • Knowledge of signs of dehydration.
	Evaluate body condition to determine need for preinjection, coinjection, or additional treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of signs of possible tissue gas. • Knowledge of techniques to treat bodies with jaundice. • Knowledge of signs of decomposition. • Knowledge of body factors to consider in selecting embalming fluids. • Knowledge of techniques to treat bodies with <u>postmortem</u> discolorations. • Knowledge of common signs of jaundice. • Knowledge of purposes of different coinjection fluids. • Knowledge of purposes of different preinjection fluids.
	Evaluate size, weight, and musculature of the body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of criteria for selecting points of injection and drainage for arterial embalming. • Knowledge of factors to consider in choosing points of injection and drainage. • Knowledge of body factors to consider in selecting embalming fluids. • Knowledge of conditions that predispose bodies to purge.
	Evaluate body for signs of a coroner-reportable death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of state laws and regulations regarding types of deaths requiring notification of the coroner or medical examiner.

II. CASE ANALYSIS (CONTINUED)		
PREPARATION (7%)	Select points of injection and drainage based on individual body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of criteria for selecting points of injection and drainage for arterial embalming. • Knowledge of factors to consider in choosing points of injection and drainage.
	Determine the need for special treatments based on external conditions to which the body could be subjected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of techniques to treat bodies with jaundice. • Knowledge of methods to embalm decomposed bodies. • Knowledge of signs of decomposition. • Knowledge of techniques to treat bodies with <u>post</u>mortem discolorations. • Knowledge of common signs of jaundice. • Knowledge of environmental factors that affect the embalming process. • Knowledge of techniques to treat bodies with <u>pre</u>mortem discolorations. • Knowledge of effects of predeath circulatory conditions on the embalming process.

III. ARTERIAL EMBALMING (32%)

DESCRIPTION: This content area assesses the candidate's ability to embalm by arterial injection, select methods and fluids according to cause of death and condition of body, and determine the need for supplemental treatments.

PROCESS OF EMBALMING (15%)	Raise vessels for injection and drainage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of procedures for treating bodies with edema. • Knowledge of techniques to prevent visible distention of the tissues. • Knowledge of techniques for multiple-site injection and drainage. • Knowledge of techniques and procedures to elevate and ligate vessels for injection of arterial solution. • Knowledge of types of embalming instruments. • Knowledge of procedures for treating bodies with dehydration. • Knowledge of effects of intermittent, unrestricted or restricted drainage on embalming. • Knowledge of methods to control drainage during embalming process.
	Select pressure and rates of flow of the embalming solution based on individual body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of procedures to treat autopsied bodies. • Knowledge of signs of poor distribution of arterial solution. • Knowledge of procedures for treating bodies with edema. • Knowledge of procedures to treat bodies with severe trauma. • Knowledge of techniques to correct poor distribution of arterial solution. • Knowledge of techniques to prevent visible distention of the tissues. • Knowledge of effects of rate of flow and/or pressure of arterial solution on embalming. • Knowledge of effects of intermittent, unrestricted or restricted drainage on embalming.
	Locate selected points of injection and drainage using surface features, anatomical landmarks, and linear guides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of methods to prevent tissue gas transfer during arterial embalming. • Knowledge of specialized techniques for embalming bodies with tissue gas. • Knowledge of techniques for multiple-site injection and drainage. • Knowledge of specialized techniques for embalming obese bodies. • Knowledge of specialized techniques for embalming bodies with advanced decomposition.

III. ARTERIAL EMBALMING (CONTINUED)		
PROCESS OF EMBALMING (CONTINUED)	Inject arterial embalming solution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of methods to prevent tissue gas transfer during arterial embalming. • Knowledge of specialized techniques for embalming bodies with tissue gas. • Knowledge of procedures to treat bodies with severe trauma. • Knowledge of techniques for promoting good distribution of arterial solution. • Knowledge of methods for injection of arterial solutions. • Knowledge of methods of preparing embalming solutions. • Knowledge of treatments that minimize or prevent postembalming dehydration. • Knowledge of specialized techniques for embalming bodies with advanced decomposition. • Knowledge of effects of total volume of arterial or nonarterial solutions on embalming. • Knowledge of effect of induced chemicals in the body on the selection of embalming techniques. • Knowledge of effects of different coinjection fluids on embalming result.
	Evaluate embalming results to determine need for supplemental treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of methods to relieve gases during and after arterial embalming. • Knowledge of techniques for evaluating arterial embalming results. • Knowledge of supplemental methods of embalming. • Knowledge of effects of different preinjection fluids on embalming results.
SUPPLEMENTAL PROCEDURES (10%)	Assess distribution of arterial solution to determine need for additional measures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of signs of good distribution of arterial solution. • Knowledge of signs of poor distribution of arterial solution. • Knowledge of effects of embalming fluids on the body. • Knowledge of techniques for promoting good distribution of arterial solution. • Knowledge of techniques to correct poor distribution of arterial solution. • Knowledge of methods to remove or reduce discolorations with arterial embalming. • Knowledge of mechanical and physical procedures to improve distribution of arterial fluid. • Knowledge of effects of humectants on the body. • Knowledge of effects of dyes on the body. • Knowledge of effects of surfactants on the body.

III. ARTERIAL EMBALMING (CONTINUED)		
SUPPLEMENTAL PROCEDURES (CONTINUED)	Perform external preservation as supplementary treatment to arterial embalming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of treatments for bodies with vascular collapse or incomplete circulatory system.
REMOVAL AND CLOSURE PROCEDURES (7%)	Close incisions and possible points of leakage to prevent seepage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of procedures to close incisions from points of injection, drainage, and seepage. • Knowledge of procedures to treat bodies with severe trauma. • Knowledge of procedures to treat bodies that have undergone <u>postmortem</u> medical procedures. • Knowledge of procedures to treat bodies that have undergone <u>premortem</u> medical procedures.
	Remove medical apparatus from the body to prevent fluid seepage problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of procedures to treat bodies that have undergone <u>postmortem</u> medical procedures. • Knowledge of procedures to treat bodies that have undergone <u>premortem</u> medical procedures.

IV. CAVITY EMBALMING (10%)

DESCRIPTION: This content area assesses the candidate's ability to aspirate and inject the body cavity and internal organs to facilitate the embalming process.

Aspirate contents of body cavities and internal organs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of methods to relieve gases during and after cavity embalming. • Knowledge of methods to aspirate and treat body cavities. • Knowledge of methods to close points of aspiration. • Knowledge of different types of absorbent materials used in the embalming process. • Knowledge of types of hand-held cavity embalming instruments. • Knowledge of methods to locate insertion points for aspirating the cranium.
Inject cavity fluid into body cavities and internal organs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of methods to prevent tissue gas transfer during cavity embalming. • Knowledge of methods to aspirate and treat body cavities. • Knowledge of procedures to care for viscera from autopsied bodies. • Knowledge of methods to chemically treat viscera. • Knowledge of effect of cavity fluids on the body. • Knowledge of methods to inject cavity fluids. • Knowledge of types of hand-held cavity embalming instruments.
Determine need for reaspiration and reinjection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of methods to chemically treat viscera. • Knowledge of effect of cavity fluids on the body. • Knowledge of conditions that necessitate continuous evaluation of cavity embalming procedure.

V. RESTORATION (6%)

DESCRIPTION: This content area assesses the candidate's ability to evaluate the condition of the body to determine need and extent of restorative treatments.

Perform restorative treatments to achieve a natural appearance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of techniques for major restorations. • Knowledge of techniques for removing or reducing discolorations on skin surfaces. • Knowledge of techniques for minor restorations. • Knowledge of methods of restorative closure. • Knowledge of agents to cauterize tissue.
Determine type of and necessity for restorative treatments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of restorative materials to close the mouth and eyes. • Knowledge of materials to seal the surfaces of autopsy sutures. • Knowledge of purposes of supplemental restorative materials.

VI. POSTEMBALMING TREATMENTS (18%)

DESCRIPTION: This content area assesses the candidate's ability to complete the embalming process, including the final cleansing and positioning of the body as well as sanitizing all embalming instruments and equipment used during the embalming process.

CLEANSE AND POSITION BODY (7%)	Cleanse body to remove residues from embalming process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of procedures and techniques to treat insects, lice, or maggots on or in the body. • Knowledge of purposes of different types of cleansing agents and disinfectants. • Knowledge of methods to cleanse body and hair after embalming.
	Perform postembalming preparations to achieve a natural appearance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of postembalming methods to minimize external dehydration and leakage. • Knowledge of postembalming methods to maintain body positioning.
PREP-ROOM SANITATION (11%)	Cleanse and disinfect embalming instruments after each individual body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of procedures for handling and disposal of biohazardous waste and sharps. • Knowledge of state laws and regulations pertaining to sanitation of embalming instruments. • Knowledge of purposes of different types of cleansing agents and disinfectants.
	Cleanse and disinfect preparation room after each individual body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of purposes of different types of cleansing agents and disinfectants. • Knowledge of state laws and regulations pertaining to sanitation of embalming preparation room.
	Cleanse and disinfect embalming equipment after each individual body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of state laws and regulations pertaining to sanitation of equipment. • Knowledge of state laws and regulations pertaining to sanitation of embalming preparation room.

CHAPTER 4. DAY OF THE EXAMINATION

REQUISITE MATERIALS FOR ADMITTANCE

Candidates must report to the registration area at the time and date specified on the Notice of Admittance for the examination. The proctors will collect the Notice of Admittance and ask to see official photographic identification, such as a driver's license or passport. Candidates who do not bring the Notice of Admittance and appropriate photographic identification will **NOT** be allowed to participate in the examination.

EXAMINATION SECURITY

Candidates should be prepared to turn off pagers and cell phones and place handbags, briefcases, and other such personal belongings away from the examination table. The proctors will provide instructions regarding registration, seat assignments, completion of examination materials, and other steps in the examination process.

Section 123 of the Business and Professions Code prohibits any person who takes the examination from engaging in any conduct that subverts or attempts to subvert any licensing examination or the administration of a licensing examination. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, obstructing the standardized administration of the examination, removing examination materials from the examination room, communicating examination information to another person, copying answers from another person, using unauthorized books, equipment, notes or other printed materials during the examination, and permitting an impersonator take the examination. (The full text of section 123 is provided in Appendix A). Violation of Section 123 will result in disqualification from the examination and possible denial of a license.

CHAPTER 5. NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

PASSING SCORE

Examinations often vary in difficulty depending on the form of the examination administered. For this reason, the passing score is determined using a criterion-referenced method rather than a set score or percentage. Applying the criterion-referenced method, the difficulty of each item on the examination is evaluated relative to the minimum competence standard for safe practice. As a result, the passing score is lower for difficult examinations, and is higher for easier examinations, providing a safeguard to both the candidate and the public.

RELEASE OF RESULTS

The Bureau will notify candidates of examination results in writing within 21-35 days of the scheduled examination date. If the results do not arrive within 35 days of the examination date, submit a written request to the Bureau for a duplicate copy of your results.

Examination results will not be released by telephone or in response to a personal visit.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Applicants and candidates must notify the Bureau in writing of any change of address. Allow 30 days for the change of address to be processed.

RE-APPLICATION PROCESS

Candidates who fail the examination must submit a new application with the required fee by the final filing date.

APPENDIX A - BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS CODE**SECTIONS 123 AND 496**

§ 123. It is a misdemeanor for any person to engage in any conduct which subverts or attempts to subvert any licensing examination or the administration of an examination, including, but not limited to:

(a) Conduct which violates the security of the examination materials; removing from the examination room any examination materials without authorization; the unauthorized reproduction by any means of any portion of the actual licensing examination; aiding by any means the unauthorized reproduction of any portion of the actual licensing examination; paying or using professional or paid examination-takers for the purpose of reconstructing any portion of the licensing examination; obtaining examination questions or other examination material, except by specific authorization either before, during, or after an examination; or using or purporting to use any examination questions or materials which were improperly removed or taken from any examination for the purpose of instructing or preparing any applicant for examination; or selling, distributing, buying, receiving, or having unauthorized possession of any portion of a future, current, or previously administered licensing examination.

(b) Communicating with any other examinee during the administration of a licensing examination; copying answers from another examinee or permitting one's answers to be copied by another examinee; having in one's possession during the administration of the licensing examination any books, equipment, notes, written or printed materials, or data of any kind, other than the examination materials distributed, or otherwise authorized to be in one's possession during the examination; or impersonating any examinee or having an impersonator take the licensing examination on one's behalf.

Nothing in this section shall preclude prosecution under the authority provided for in any other provision of law.

In addition to any other penalties, a person found guilty of violating this section, shall be liable for the actual damages sustained by the agency administering the examination not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) and the costs of litigation.

(c) If any provision of this section or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the section that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this section are severable.

§ 496. A board may deny, suspend, revoke, or otherwise restrict a license on the ground that an applicant or licensee has violated Section 123 pertaining to subversion of licensing examinations.